

CLAIMS:

1. A system for permitting collaborative annotations of a document, the system comprising:

- 5 a plurality of workstations each comprising a computer processor, a display, and a capture device for capturing a digital image of a document; and
a base computer communicating with the plurality of workstations;

wherein the system is operative to:

(a) identify handwritten annotations in images of documents captured at each workstation; and

- 10 (b) communicate the data representing the identified annotation images to each workstation to permit an annotation entered at a first workstation to be distributed to other workstations for display.

2. A system according to claim 1, wherein the system is operative to identify a new annotation made at a workstation, and to update the distribution of annotations to the workstations.

- 15 3. A system according to claim 1, wherein the capture device at least one workstation comprises a camera.

4. A system according to claim 1, wherein the each annotation is stored in the form of an annotation object, the object comprising:

- 20 (a) information representing the annotation as a bitmap; and
(b) information indicating the location of the annotation in a document.

5. A system according to claim 4, wherein the object further comprises information representing the origin of the annotation.

- 25 6. A system according to claim 4, wherein the object further comprises information representing at least one of a time and date associated with the annotation.

7. A system according to claim 4, further comprising information representing the identity of the document with which the annotation is associated.

8. A system according to claim 1, wherein at least one of the workstations is operative to display annotations in a plurality of different colors, the color being indicative of the origin of the annotation.

9. A system according to claim 1, wherein each workstation is
5 operative to identify handwritten annotations.

10. A system according to claim 1, wherein the base computer is operative to identify handwritten annotations.

11. In a method for distributing annotations made at one workstation of a collaborative annotation system to other workstations in the system for
10 display, the improvement comprising:

(a) capturing a digital image of an document;

(b) identifying a portion of the image corresponding to a handwritten annotation in the document; and

(c) distributing data representing the handwritten annotation to said
15 other workstations for display.

12. A method for permitting collaborative annotation of a document in a system which comprises:

a plurality of workstations each comprising a computer processor, a display, and a capture device for capturing a digital image of a document; and

20 a base computer communicating with the plurality of workstations;

wherein the method comprises:

(a) identifying handwritten annotations in images of documents captured at each workstation; and

(b) communicating the data representing the identified annotation
25 images to each workstation to permit an annotation entered at a first workstation to be distributed to other workstations for display.

13. A method according to claim 12, further comprising the step of identifying a new annotation made at a workstation, and updating the distribution of annotations to other workstations.

14. A method according to claim 12, further comprising the step of capturing an image at at least one workstation using a camera device.

15. A method according to claim 12, wherein identified annotations are stored as annotation objects comprising:

- 5 (a) information representing the annotation as a bitmap; and
- (b) information indicating the location of the annotation in a document.

16. A method according to claim 15, wherein the object further comprises information representing the origin of the annotation.

- 10 17. A method according to claim 15, wherein the object further comprises information representing at least one of a time and date associated with the annotation.

18. A method according to claim 15, wherein the object further comprises information representing the identity of the document with which the annotation is associated.

- 15 19. A method according to claim 12, further comprising selectively displaying, at a workstation, a plurality of annotations originating from at least two different other workstations.

20. A method according to claim 19, each annotation is displayed in a color indicative of the origin of the annotation.

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